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House approves tax code overhaul

After a party-line vote, the contentious bill faces uncertainty in the Senate

Herb Jackson
USA TODAY

In a party-line vote, the Republican-controlled House passed a sweeping overhaul of the tax code Thursday that dramatically cuts the top corporate rate and lowers rates for individuals and families while taking away deductions and credits.

The 227-205 vote was a victory for House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., who needed to show his party could deliver on a major campaign promise and produce a significant legislative win for President Donald Trump.

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders hailed the House vote as a "big step forward fulfilling our promise to deliver historic tax cuts for the American people by the end of the year."

But whether Thursday's vote is a sign that one-party government under Trump has started to click — or whether it's a Pyrrhic victory that founders in the Senate like the GOP's earlier attempt to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act — will be decided in the coming weeks.

House passage is only the first step in what could be a difficult and contentious process, and the final bill could look significantly different.

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Inside: Ryan does his job on tax measure; now up to Senate, **4A**

Breaking down the tax bill, **4A**

No Quarter
Daniel Bice
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
USA TODAY NETWORK – WIS.

Ex-Sheriff Clarke's home security cost $450,000

He had guards for nearly 70 weeks in past 2 years

Former Milwaukee County Sheriff **David A. Clarke Jr.** may be long gone, but the numbers on his time in office keep rolling in.

Consider this:

The total cost to taxpayers for providing round-the-clock security for Clarke's house in recent years came to nearly $450,000.

Records provided by the Sheriff's Office in response to a September records request show the county paid $220,723 for deputies to sit outside Clarke's house on the city's northwest side for 34 weeks in 2015-'16.

Clarke

That figure comes in addition to the $226,802 that was paid to cover the salary and benefits of deputies doing the same for the first eight months of this year. Officials had earlier released this number.

In all, Clarke's house was under constant watch by law enforcement for nearly 70 weeks in the past two years.

Previous sheriffs have not assigned deputies to rotate standing guard at their homes.

Clarke's successor, Acting Sheriff **Richard Schmidt**, explained that this type of security was provided because of threats against Clarke, the flame-throwing ally of President **Donald Trump** who was the county's top lawman for 15 years until his resignation in late August.

The decision to provide specialized detail for Clarke's house coincided with Clarke's decision to begin traveling in support of Trump during the 2016 campaign. He was also often out of town earning outside income by giving speeches on the conservative lecture circuit.

Schmidt ended the practice in September in a cost-cutting move.

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HOLIDAY GLOW

Mayor Tom Barrett gathers around children who help throw the switch to light the Milwaukee City Hall Christmas tree during lighting ceremonies at E. Wells and N. Water streets Thursday night. See more photos at ***jsonline.com/news***. RICK WOOD / MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL

St. Louis' Emerson raises bid to acquire Rockwell

Rick Barrett
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
USA TODAY NETWORK – WISCONSIN

St. Louis has the Gateway Arch, and Milwaukee has one of the world's biggest four-sided clocks. Now, it's clearer than ever that a St. Louis company really wants the clock.

Emerson Electric Co. of St. Louis on Thursday raised its offer to buy Milwaukee-based Rockwell Automation to about $29 billion.

An acquisition would be a coup for Emerson, a sometimes-competitor to Rockwell. But it could be a blow to Milwaukee if Emerson ultimately pulled Rockwell's headquarters out of the city's south side, where the company's landmark 17-story clock tower — still commonly called the Allen-Bradley clock tower, after Rockwell's predecessor company — dominates the skyline.

A global manufacturer of industrial controls equipment and technology, Rockwell is a $6 billion company with 22,000 employees worldwide.

"Rockwell is a valued part of the local economy. This is a company that has grown in Milwaukee, innovated in Milwaukee, and has employed thousands of people here," Mayor Tom Barrett said after Emerson announced its third bid for Rockwell since August.

"Whatever the future holds for Rockwell, I want it to continue to have a significant role in our business sector and community," Barrett said.

Emerson, a $15.3 billion company with 81,000 employees, has a large presence in the automation controls industry.

Its $29 billion bid for Rockwell consists of $135 per share in cash and $90 per share in Emerson stock.

Whether the deal materializes is far from certain. In October, Rockwell's board of directors rebuffed Emerson's offer of $215 per share, or $27.6 billion. In August, it turned down an Emerson bid of $200 per share.

Rockwell said its board of directors would carefully review the latest proposal to determine whether it's in the best interest of the company and its shareholders.

"The Rockwell Automation Board expects to respond to Emerson's proposal in due course," the company said.

Emerson said the combined companies would have approximately $23 billion in annual revenue, supporting increased investments in software and technology and an acceleration of bottom-line growth.

"As outlined in our prior proposals, we would work with Rockwell to select a management team using a 'best of both' philosophy, with significant roles for

See EMERSON, Page 9A

Business
Bon-Ton plans to close at least 40 more stores by end of 2018. **8A**

Sports
WIAA football champions crowned in divisions 4, 5, 6, 7. **1B**

Weather
High 45° Low 33°
Rain. Forecast, **4C**

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